



October 2003

Promise Scholarship Program Adoption of Updated Rules

Executive Summary

Overview

The Promise Scholarship helps high-achieving students from low- and middle-income families pay for college. In fiscal year 2004, the program will use about \$6.3 million in state money to help about 7,000 students. Students are eligible to receive up to \$930 in the 2003-2004 academic year.

During the Board's September meeting, HECB staff briefed the Board on proposed changes to program rules. The proposed rules implement a satisfactory progress standard that recipients must meet in order to continue to receive assistance. The Board is permitted to impose this condition on recipients under the program's authorizing statute.

A public hearing is scheduled for October 21, 2003. All comments received during that hearing will be transmitted to the Board for consideration when adopting final rules.

Program Background

The 2002 legislation enacting the Promise Scholarship program in statute gave the HECB permission to devise a satisfactory progress policy for the program. Although the Board's 2002 Promise Scholarship study did not indicate that student withdrawal or severe academic failure was a significant problem, some aid administrators expressed concern over the lack of a satisfactory progress standard for Promise recipients.

According to aid administrators, while the academic failure of Promise recipients is not a severe problem, when it does occur, it is a visible and glaring exception to the standards imposed for all other recipients of state-funded student aid. HECB staff concurred with the aid administrators and recommended implementing a satisfactory progress standard on Promise Scholarship recipients that is consistent with that used for federal student aid programs.

Currently, all schools use federally mandated and approved satisfactory progress policies for recipients of federal and institutional assistance. While the exact conditions of each school's policy can vary (within limits) from school to school, it is always consistently applied to all students within each institution.

To ensure consistency and efficiency, HECB staff recommend relying on each school's approved satisfactory progress policy for use with Promise Scholarship recipients. If adopted, schools will begin monitoring the progress of scholarship recipients with the beginning of the next winter quarter or spring semester.

Summary of Proposed Adoption

To receive a Promise Scholarship payment, eligible recipients must be making satisfactory progress according to the school's approved policy for the receipt of federal aid.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends Board adoption of Resolution 03-31.

RESOLUTION NO. 03-31

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board is permitted by RCW 28B.119.010 (9) to establish a satisfactory progress policy for the continued receipt of the Promise Scholarship; and

WHEREAS, The aid administrators have requested that the Board adopt a policy in order to be consistent with the treatment of all other student aid programs; and

WHEREAS, Each school has a satisfactory progress policy that has been approved for the continued receipt of federal student aid; and

WHEREAS, Use of the federal policy as the standard for the Promise Scholarship program would result in the greatest efficiency for schools and ensure consistency for students;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts permanent rules amending WAC 250-80-060 to add a satisfactory progress requirement to the Promise Scholarship program, consistent with the policy used by each school for their federal student aid programs.

Adopted:

October 29, 2003

Attest:

Bob Craves, Chair

Ann Ramsay-Jenkins, Secretary